



Natural Resources Conservation Service
P.O. Box 2890
Washington, D.C. 20013

Weekly Report - Snowpack / Drought Monitor Update

Date: 29 March 2012

SNOTEL SNOWPACK AND PRECIPITATION SUMMARY

Snow: [Snow Water-Equivalent](#): River basins over the Northern and Central Cascades, the Panhandle of Idaho, and the eastern slope of the Northern Rockies continue to hold high SWE values. However, the Southwest is approaching seasonal melt-out while abnormally warm temperatures over Wyoming and Colorado have impacted snow cover significantly this week (Fig. 1). [7-Day Snow Depth Change](#) ending yesterday morning shows some increases over the Northern Sierra and Southern Cascades but substantial decreases elsewhere as would be expected during the first full week of spring (Fig. 1a).

Temperature: [SNOTEL](#) and ACIS 7-day temperature anomaly showed values well above normal over the eastern slope of the Rockies. Cooler temperatures influenced the West Coast States Northernmost Rockies, and the Sierra (Fig. 2). ACIS [7-day average temperature anomalies](#) show the greatest positive temperature departures over Western High Plains (>+15°F) and the greatest negative departures over parts of northern California and Oregon (<-6°F). This pattern reflects continued ridging over the Central US and troughing over the West Coast (Fig. 2a).

Precipitation: [ACIS](#) 7-day average precipitation amounts for the period ending yesterday shows the wettest areas over the northern California coast (Fig. 3). However, in terms of percent of normal, the western half of the West (less the Northern Great Basin and western Washington) was very wet (Fig. 3a). Very dry conditions dominated the Southwestern States and Northwestern High Plains. Since the start of the [2012 Water-Year](#) that began on 1 October 2011, the seasonal moisture has favored northern Wyoming, parts of eastern Montana, and west-central New Mexico. Drier than normal conditions reign over most of the southern half of the West (Fig. 3b). Since the start of [March](#), the resurgence of La Niña is very apparent. Northern States have benefitted with abundant moisture. This late season moisture is not typical of La Niña but then again, no two La Niñas (or El Niños) are necessarily similar (Fig. 3c).

National Summary: For the second consecutive week, locally heavy rain provided drought relief in the south-central U.S., while another in a series of late-season Pacific storms brought beneficial precipitation to much of the Northwest. Much-needed rain fell across the central Atlantic Coastal states, but rain largely bypassed the Northeast. Unseasonable warmth persisted nearly nationwide, maintaining unseasonably high evapotranspiration rates and crop water demands across the Great Plains and Midwest.

Western U.S.: Late-season storminess provided much-needed precipitation across western and northern portion of the region, while dry, unfavorably warm weather settled over central and eastern drought areas of the west.

In northern portions of the region, another in a series of late-season Pacific storms generated moderate to heavy rain and mountain snow (2-6 inches liquid equivalent), maintaining favorable spring runoff prospects from the Klamath Mountains northward into the Cascades. Snowpacks

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increased in northwestern Oregon and from northeastern Oregon into northern Idaho and northwestern Montana. However, the lingering Moderate Drought (D1) in central Washington received little if any precipitation, with only minor reductions made to southeastern portions of this area (where precipitation totaled more than half an inch). In northeastern Oregon, precipitation totaled locally more than an inch, resulting in additional reduction of D1 and D0.

In southern portions of the region, showers in the west contrasted with dry, increasingly warm conditions farther east. Rain and high-elevation snow fell in the Sierra Nevada, although snow-water equivalents remained in the lowest 5th percentile (indicative of D3 drought) in southern portions of the range, where Severe Drought (D2) persisted. A weakening disturbance produced 1 to 2 inches of rain along the southern California Coast, preventing – for the time being – any drought intensification in these locales. The Southwest was dry, with water-year precipitation totaling less than 30 percent of normal in the newly-expanded Severe Drought (D2) areas of southeastern California and neighboring portions of southern Nevada. Expansion of Extreme (D3) drought was noted in southwestern Arizona, as local assessment coupled with satellite-derived vegetation information indicated deteriorating conditions in this corner of the state. In Colorado, most of the state was now under Abnormal Dryness (D0) or worse, with Severe Drought (D2) introduced in the northwestern quarter of the state, where snow-water equivalents and water-year precipitation were in the lowest 5th percentile (generally 50 percent of normal or less). Author: Eric Luebehusen, U.S. Department of Agriculture.

A comprehensive narrative describing drought conditions for the nation can be found at the end of this document.

Drought Impacts Definitions

The possible impacts associated with **D4 (S, L)** drought include widespread crop/pasture losses and shortages of water in reservoirs, streams, and wells creating water emergencies. The possible impacts associated with **D3 (S, L)** drought include major crop/pasture losses and widespread water shortages or restrictions. Possible impacts from **D2 (S, L)** drought are focused on water shortages common and water restrictions imposed and crop or pasture losses likely. The possible impacts associated with **D1 (S, L)** drought are focused on water shortages developing in streams, reservoirs, or wells, and some damage to crops and pastures (Figs. 4 through 4c).

Soil Moisture

Soil moisture (Fig. 5), is simulated by the [VIC macroscale hydrologic model](#). The detailed, physically-based VIC model is driven by observed daily precipitation and temperature maxima and minima from approximately 2130 stations, selected for reporting reliably in real-time and for having records of longer than 45 years (and various other criteria). Another good resource can be found at: <http://www.emc.ncep.noaa.gov/mmb/nldas/drought/>.

Soil Climate Analysis Network (SCAN)

Figure 6 provides supplemental data on soil conditions (moisture and temperatures at various depths from 2 inches to 80 inches. For more information about SCAN see ([brochure](#)).

U.S. Historical Streamflow

This map, (Fig. 7) shows the 7-day average streamflow conditions in hydrologic units of the United States and Puerto Rico for the day of year. The colors represent 7-day average

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streamflow percentiles based on historical streamflow for the day of the year. Thus, the map shows conditions adjusted for this time of the year. Only stations having at least 30 years of record are used. Sub-regions shaded gray indicate that insufficient data were available to compute a reliable 7-day average streamflow value. During winter months, this situation frequently arises due to ice effects. The data used to produce this map are provisional and have not been reviewed or edited. They may be subject to significant change.

State Activities

State government drought activities can be tracked at the following URL: <http://drought.unl.edu/mitigate/mitigate.htm>. NRCS SS/WSF State Office personnel are participating in state drought committee meetings and providing the committees and media with appropriate SS/WSF information - <http://www.wcc.nrcs.usda.gov/cgibin/bor.pl>. Additional information describing the products available from the Drought Monitor can be found at the following URL: <http://drought.unl.edu/dm/> and <http://www.drought.gov>.

For More Information

The National Water and Climate Center Homepage provide the latest available snowpack and water supply information. Please visit us at <http://www.wcc.nrcs.usda.gov>. This document is available from the following location on the NWCC homepage - <http://www.wcc.nrcs.usda.gov/water/drought/wdr.pl>. Reports from 2007 are available on-line while ones from 2001-2006 can be acquired upon request.

This report uses data and products provided by the Interagency Drought Monitor Consortium members and the National Interagency Fire Center.

/s/

Micheal L. Golden

Acting Deputy Chief, Soil Survey and Resource Assessment

Weekly Snowpack and Drought Monitor Update Report

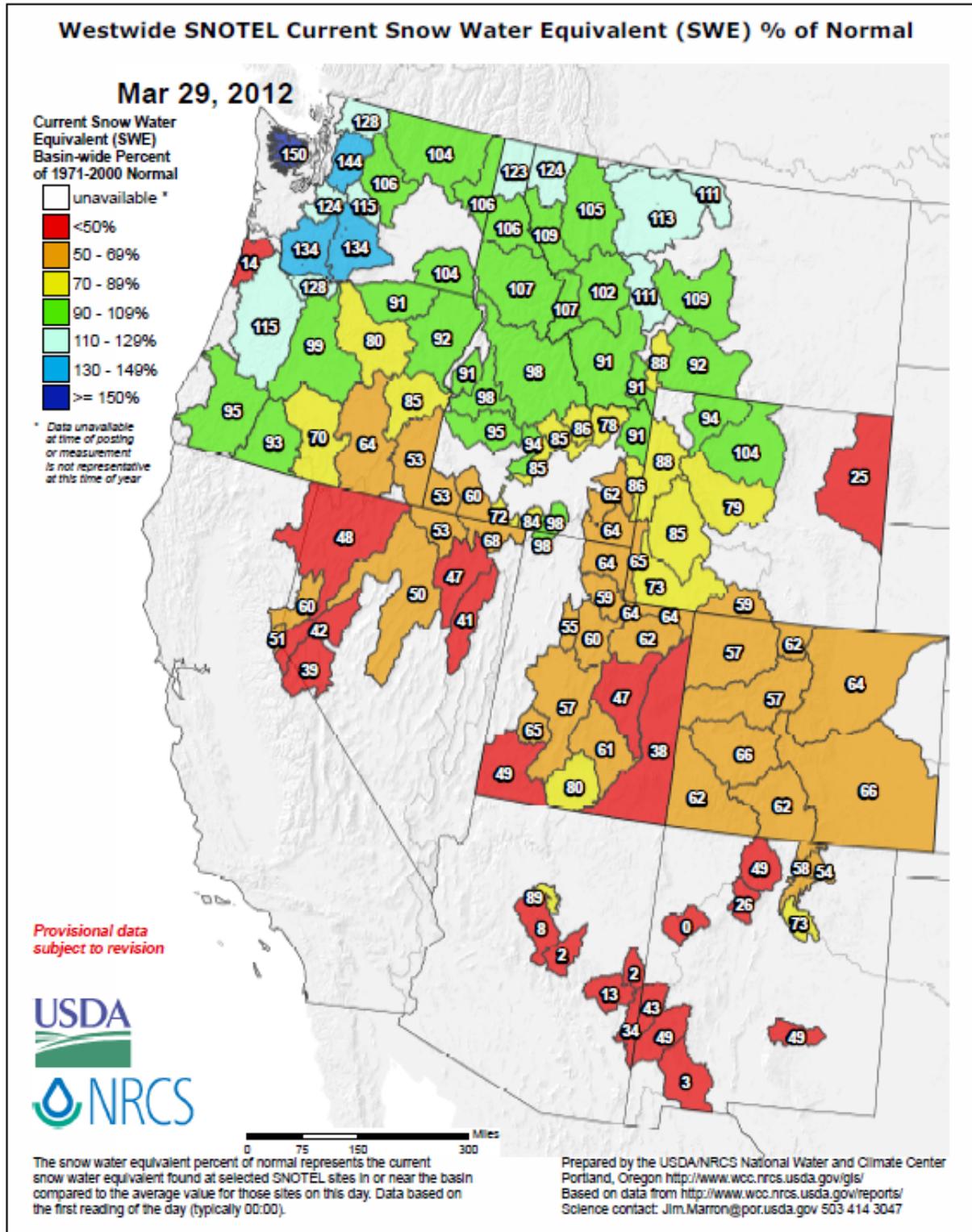


Fig. 1: Snow Water-Equivalent: River basins over the Northern and Central Cascades, the Panhandle of Idaho, and the eastern slope of the Northern Rockies continue to hold high SWE values. However, the Southwest is approaching seasonal melt-out while abnormally warm temperatures over Wyoming and Colorado have impacted snow cover significantly this week.

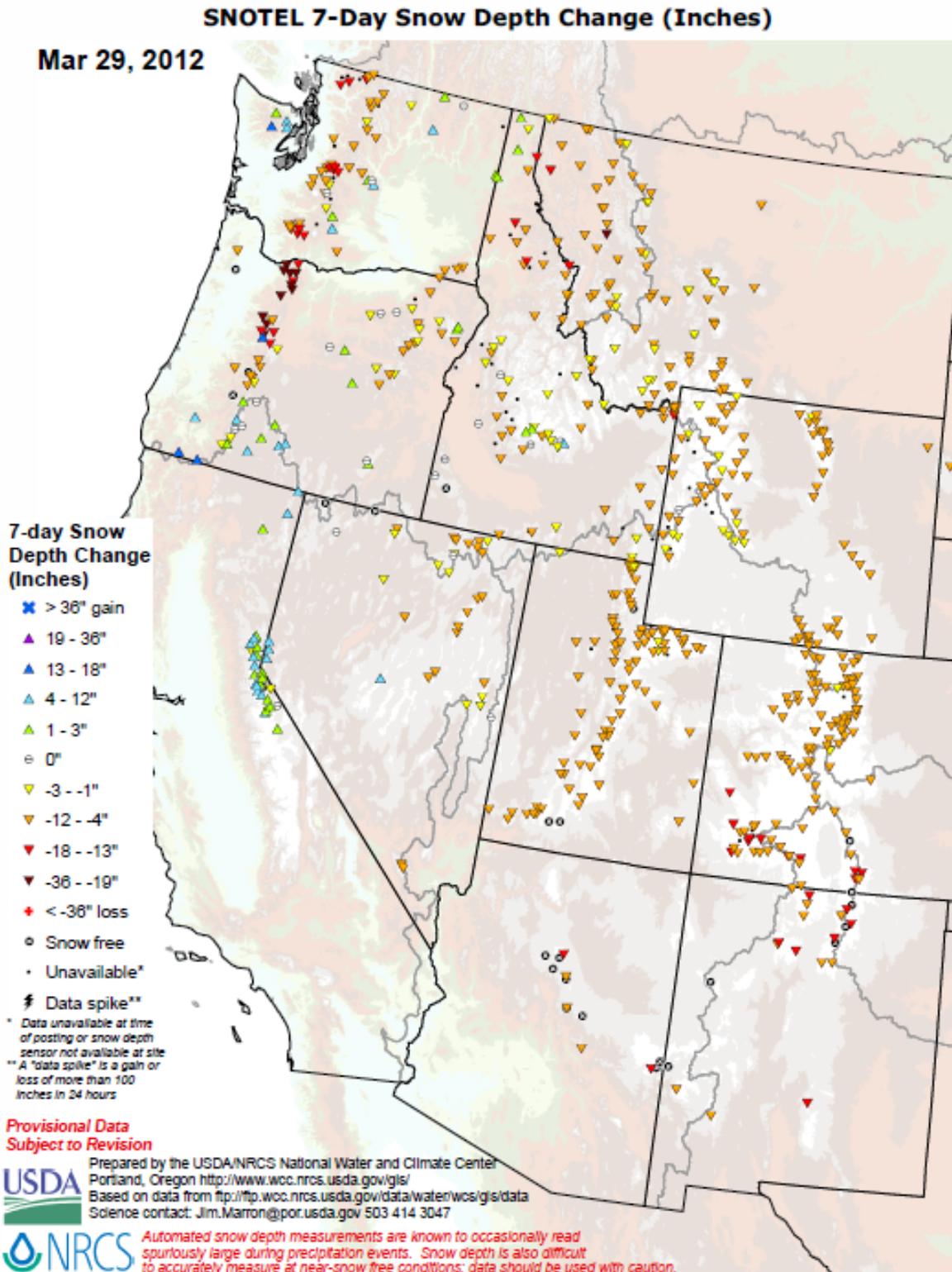


Fig. 1a: 7-Day Snow Depth Change ending yesterday morning shows some increases over the Northern Sierra and Southern Cascades but substantial decreases elsewhere as would be expected during the first full week of spring.

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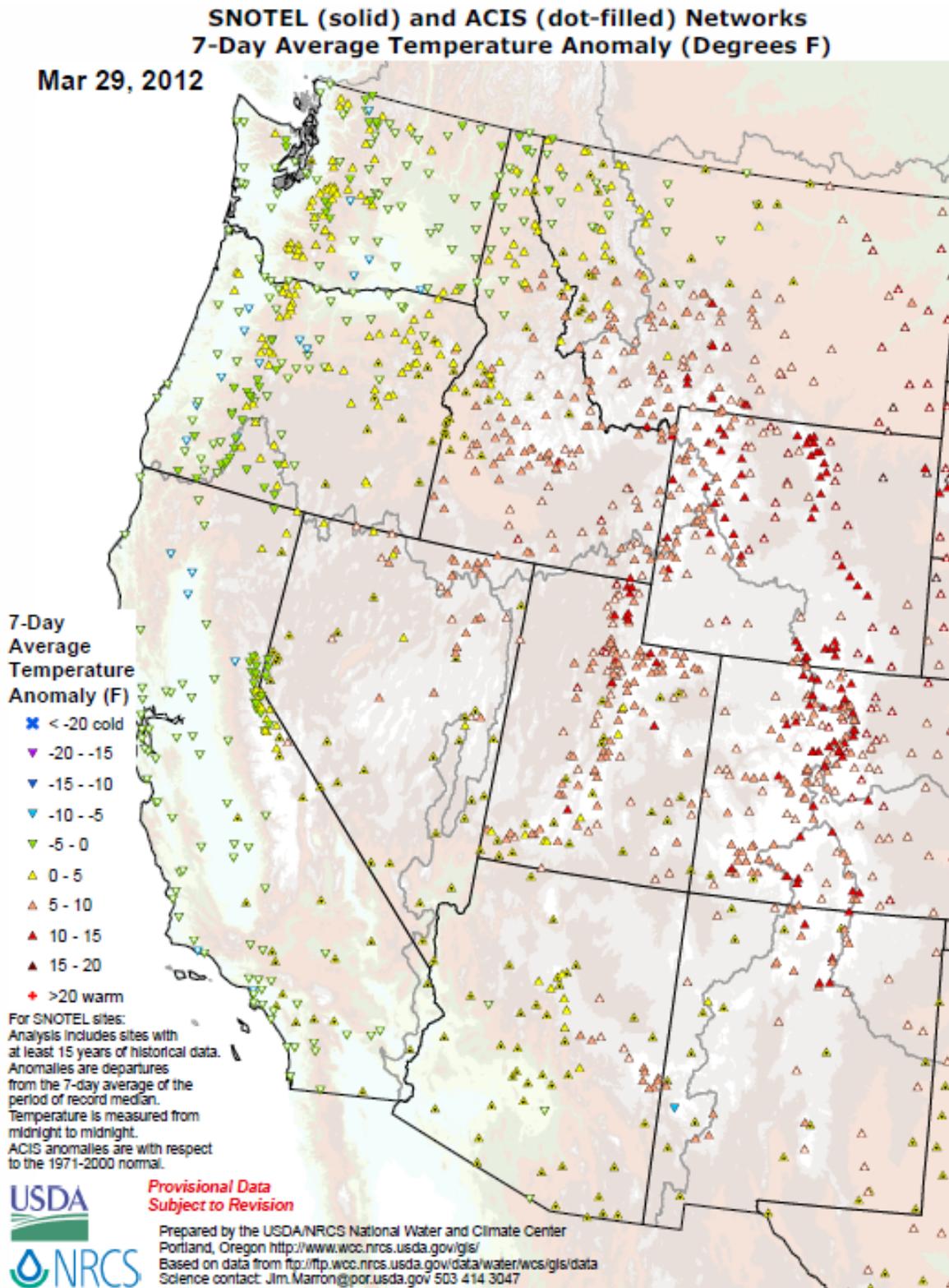
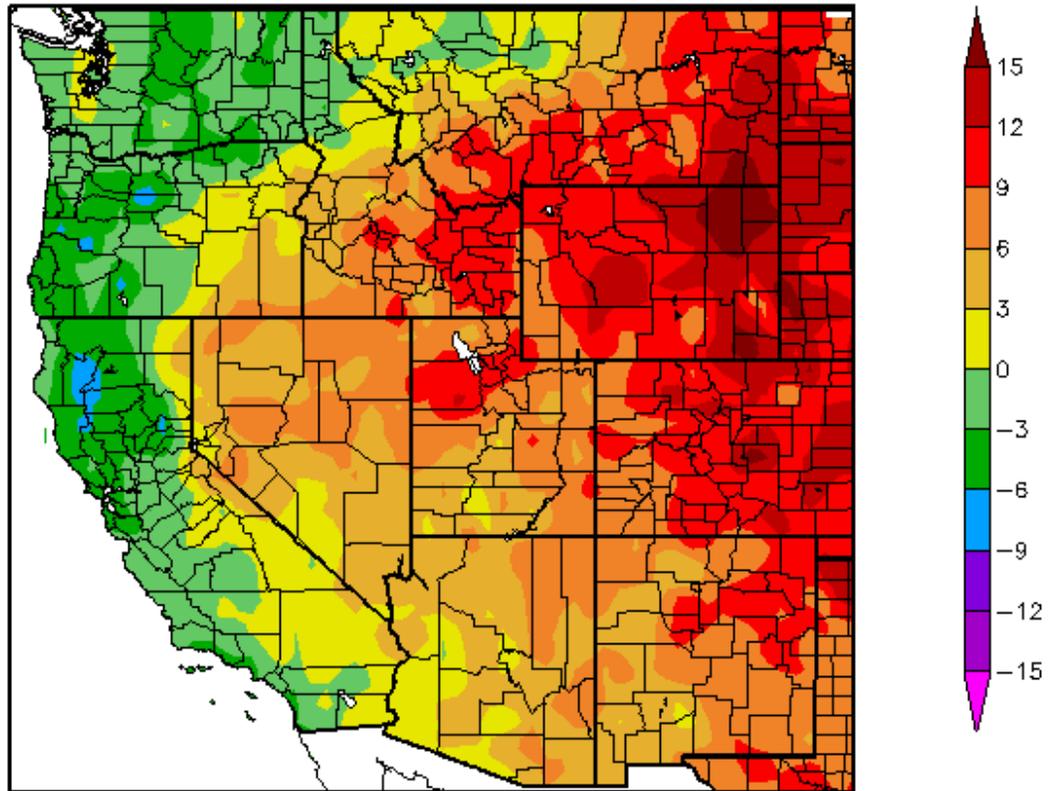


Fig. 2: SNOTEL and ACIS 7-day temperature anomaly showed values well above normal over the eastern slope of the Rockies. Cooler temperatures influenced the West Coast States, Northernmost Rockies, and the Sierra.

Departure from Normal Temperature (F)
3/22/2012 – 3/28/2012



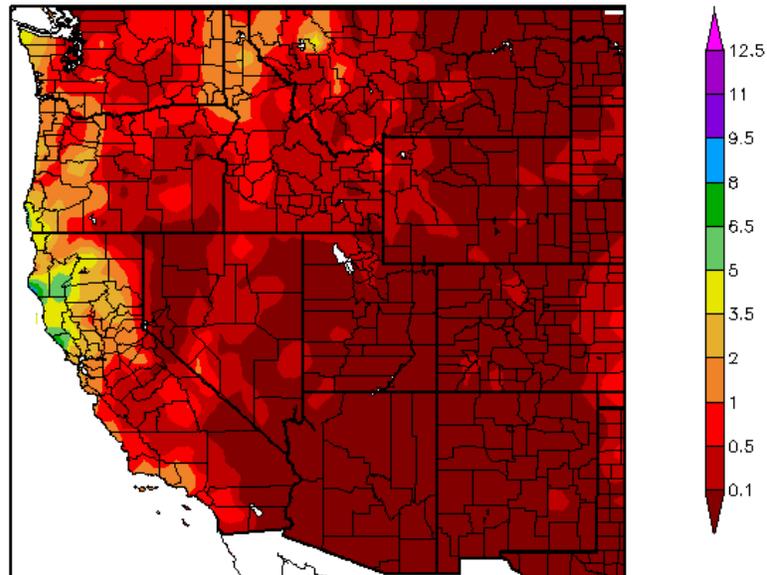
Generated 3/29/2012 at HPRCC using provisional data.

Regional Climate Centers

Fig. 2a: ACIS 7-day average temperature anomalies show the greatest positive temperature departures over Western High Plains ($>+15^{\circ}\text{F}$) and the greatest negative departures over parts of northern California and Oregon ($<-6^{\circ}\text{F}$). This pattern reflects continued ridging over the Central US and troughing over the West Coast.

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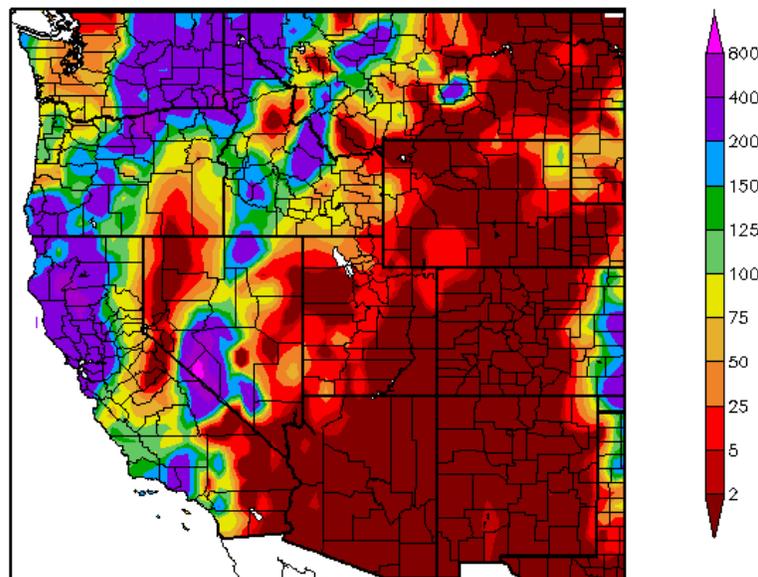
Precipitation (in)
3/22/2012 – 3/28/2012



Generated 3/29/2012 at HPRCC using provisional data.

Regional Climate Centers

Percent of Normal Precipitation (%)
3/22/2012 – 3/28/2012



Generated 3/29/2012 at HPRCC using provisional data.

Regional Climate Centers

Fig. 3 and 3a: [ACIS](#) 7-day average precipitation amounts for the period ending yesterday shows the wettest areas over the northern California coast (top). However, in terms of percent of normal, the western half of the West (less the Northern Great Basin and western Washington) was very wet (bottom). Very dry conditions dominated the Southwestern States and Northwestern High Plains.

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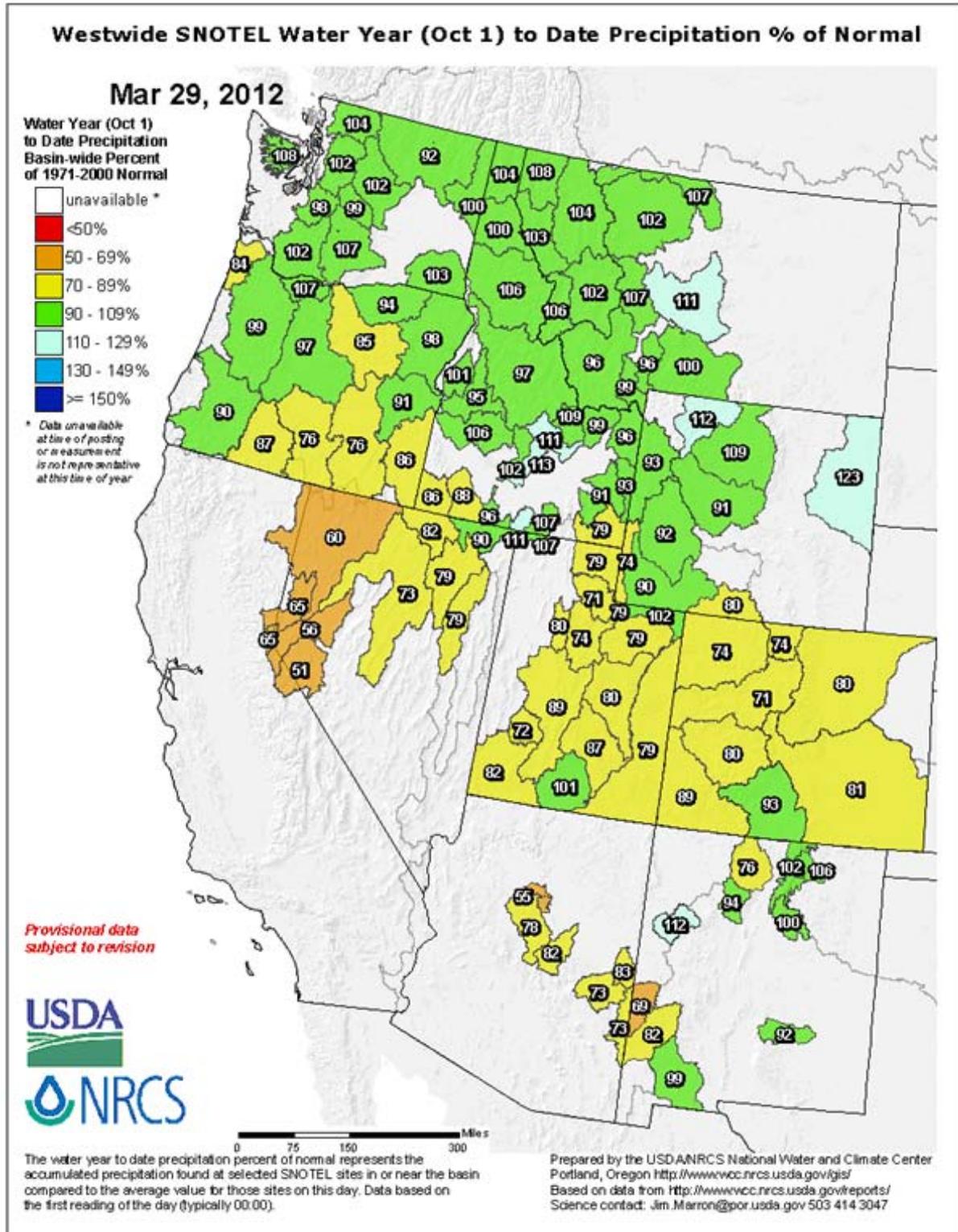


Fig 3b: Since the start of the 2012 Water-Year that began on 1 October 2011, the seasonal moisture has favored northern Wyoming, parts of eastern Montana, and west-central New Mexico. Drier the normal conditions reign over most of the southern half of the West.

Weekly Snowpack and Drought Monitor Update Report

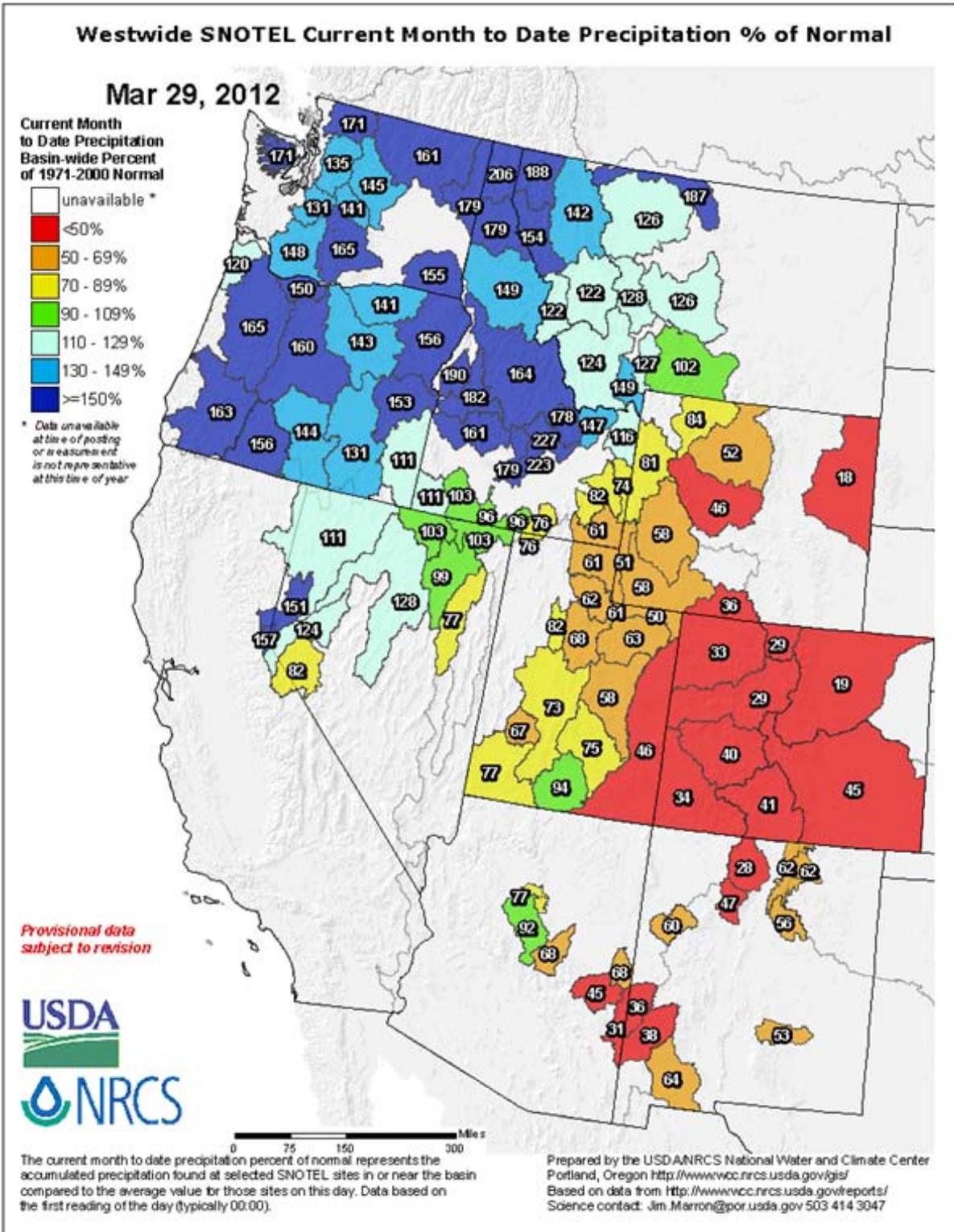


Fig 3c: Since the start of March, the resurgence of La Niña is very apparent. Northern States have benefitted with abundant moisture. This late season moisture is not typical of La Niña but then again, no two La Niñas (or El Niños) are necessarily similar.

U.S. Drought Monitor

March 27, 2012
Valid 7 a.m. EDT

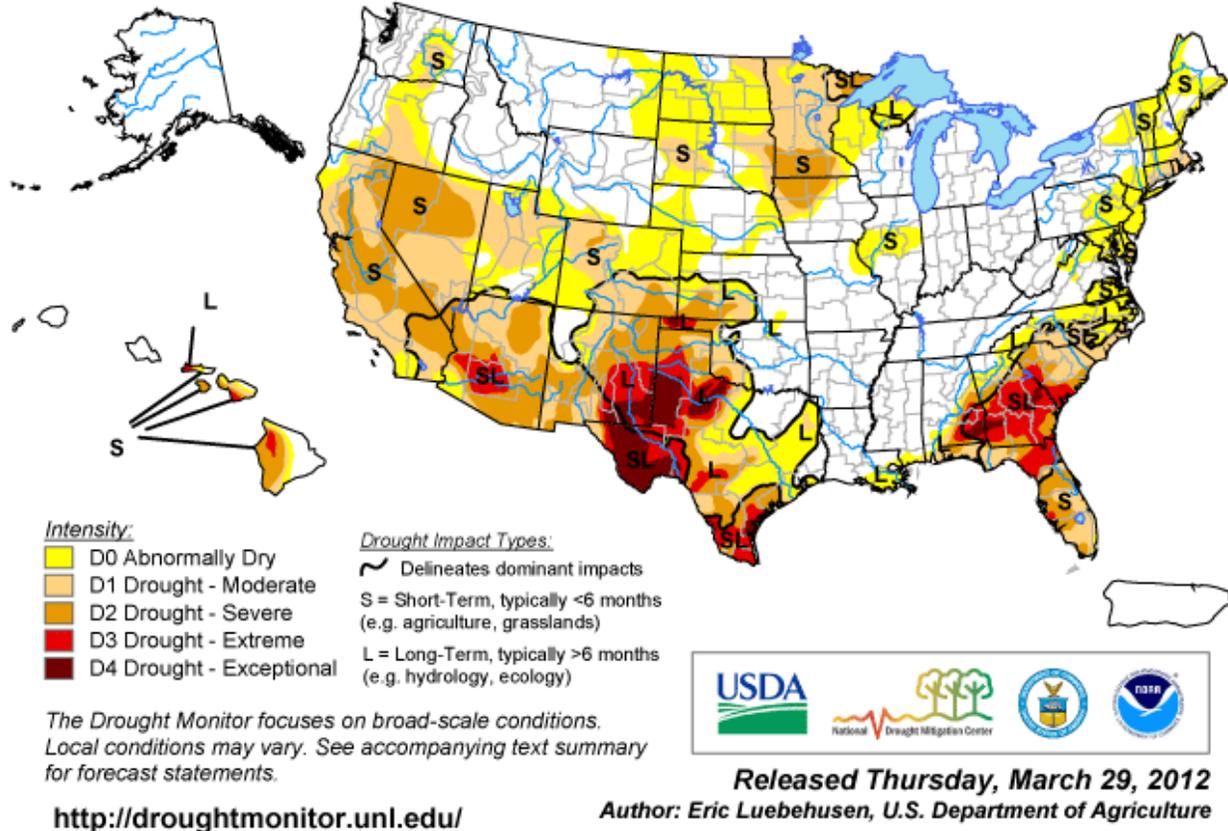


Fig. 4: Current [Drought Monitor](#) weekly summary. The exceptional D4 levels of drought are found over southeastern New Mexico, much of western Texas, the Panhandle of Oklahoma, and to a lesser extent over Georgia and southeast Alabama. For more drought news, see [Drought Impact Reporter](#).

Agriculture

[Drought limits farm gains](#)

March 8, **Colorado**. Drought cut into agricultural production in Colorado in 2011 as drought affected the southeastern part of the state. There were 152,000 acres of cotton planted, but only 60 percent of that was harvestable with an average yield of 136 bushels per acre, the lowest yield in the last four years. There were 375,000 acres of wheat planted, but just 296,000 acres were harvested. The average wheat yield was 26 bushels per acre.

[Last year's drought keeps breaking its own records](#)

March 17, **Texas, Oklahoma and New Mexico**. Approximately 57 percent of the crops planted in Texas, 68 percent of the crops planted in Oklahoma and less than 60 percent of the crops planted in New Mexico during 2011 were harvested, according to a crop production summary by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Water Supply

[Despite Increased Restrictions, Urban Water Use Climbs](#)

[Push Comes to Shove Over Water Restrictions](#)

[Texas oyster forecast improves](#)

[Wells offer chance to keep plants alive](#)

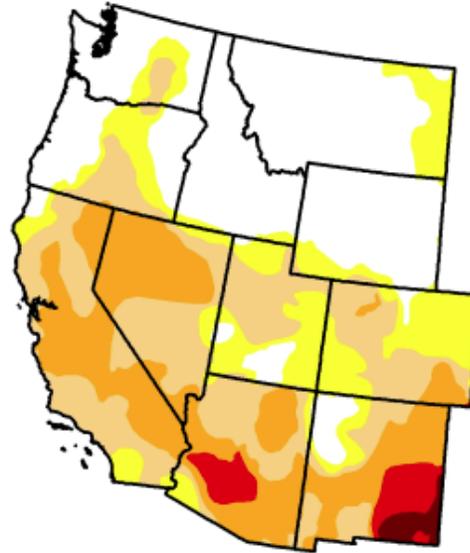
U.S. Drought Monitor

West

March 27, 2012
Valid 7 a.m. EST

Drought Conditions (Percent Area)

	None	D0-D4	D1-D4	D2-D4	D3-D4	D4
Current	35.56	64.44	47.91	23.86	3.78	0.94
Last Week (03/20/2012 map)	38.04	61.96	47.33	22.70	3.39	0.94
3 Months Ago (12/27/2011 map)	48.49	51.51	20.05	12.22	2.67	0.78
Start of Calendar Year (12/27/2011 map)	48.49	51.51	20.05	12.22	2.67	0.78
Start of Water Year (09/27/2011 map)	66.72	33.28	19.04	14.99	9.30	3.81
One Year Ago (03/22/2011 map)	75.16	24.84	17.68	9.52	1.62	0.00



Intensity:

- D0 Abnormally Dry
- D1 Drought - Moderate
- D2 Drought - Severe
- D3 Drought - Extreme
- D4 Drought - Exceptional

The Drought Monitor focuses on broad-scale conditions. Local conditions may vary. See accompanying text summary for forecast statements.



Released Thursday, March 29, 2012
Eric Luebehusen, USDA

<http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu>

Fig. 4a: Drought Monitor for the [Western States](#) with statistics over various time periods. Note some deterioration especially in the D0 category this week. For more info about conditions over California, see [Water Supply Forecast](#).

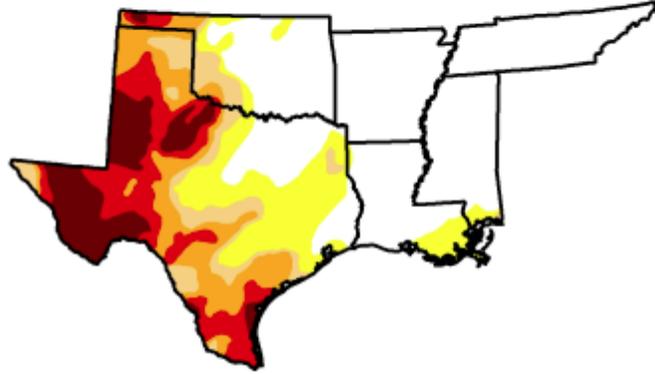
U.S. Drought Monitor

South

March 27, 2012
Valid 7 a.m. EST

Drought Conditions (Percent Area)

	None	D0-D4	D1-D4	D2-D4	D3-D4	D4
Current	49.24	50.76	37.09	29.54	19.03	9.19
Last Week (03/20/2012 map)	44.96	55.04	46.94	30.12	19.46	9.47
3 Months Ago (12/27/2011 map)	26.47	73.53	69.01	54.81	39.11	17.15
Start of Calendar Year (12/27/2011 map)	26.47	73.53	69.01	54.81	39.11	17.15
Start of Water Year (09/27/2011 map)	18.34	81.66	76.26	70.61	63.67	53.77
One Year Ago (03/22/2011 map)	8.76	91.24	77.39	50.26	20.47	0.00



Intensity:

- D0 Abnormally Dry
- D1 Drought - Moderate
- D2 Drought - Severe
- D3 Drought - Extreme
- D4 Drought - Exceptional

The Drought Monitor focuses on broad-scale conditions. Local conditions may vary. See accompanying text summary for forecast statements.



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Eric Luebehusen, USDA

<http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu>

Fig. 4b: Drought Monitor for the [South-Central States](#) with statistics over various time periods. Significant Improvements are noted in D0 and D1 categories this week.

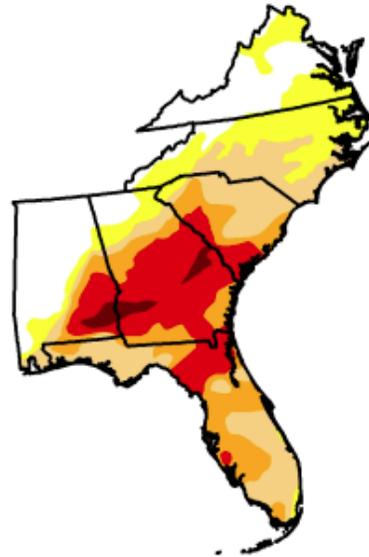
U.S. Drought Monitor

Southeast

March 27, 2012
Valid 7 a.m. EST

Drought Conditions (Percent Area)

	None	D0-D4	D1-D4	D2-D4	D3-D4	D4
Current	22.86	77.14	58.78	35.92	19.90	1.86
Last Week (03/20/2012 map)	20.03	79.97	63.93	35.95	19.95	1.86
3 Months Ago (12/27/2011 map)	40.38	59.62	43.05	28.62	18.71	0.00
Start of Calendar Year (12/27/2011 map)	40.38	59.62	43.05	28.62	18.71	0.00
Start of Water Year (09/27/2011 map)	42.24	57.76	41.82	31.77	23.48	0.00
One Year Ago (03/22/2011 map)	14.75	85.25	60.56	22.18	5.85	0.00



Intensity:

- D0 Abnormally Dry
- D1 Drought - Moderate
- D2 Drought - Severe
- D3 Drought - Extreme
- D4 Drought - Exceptional

The Drought Monitor focuses on broad-scale conditions. Local conditions may vary. See accompanying text summary for forecast statements.

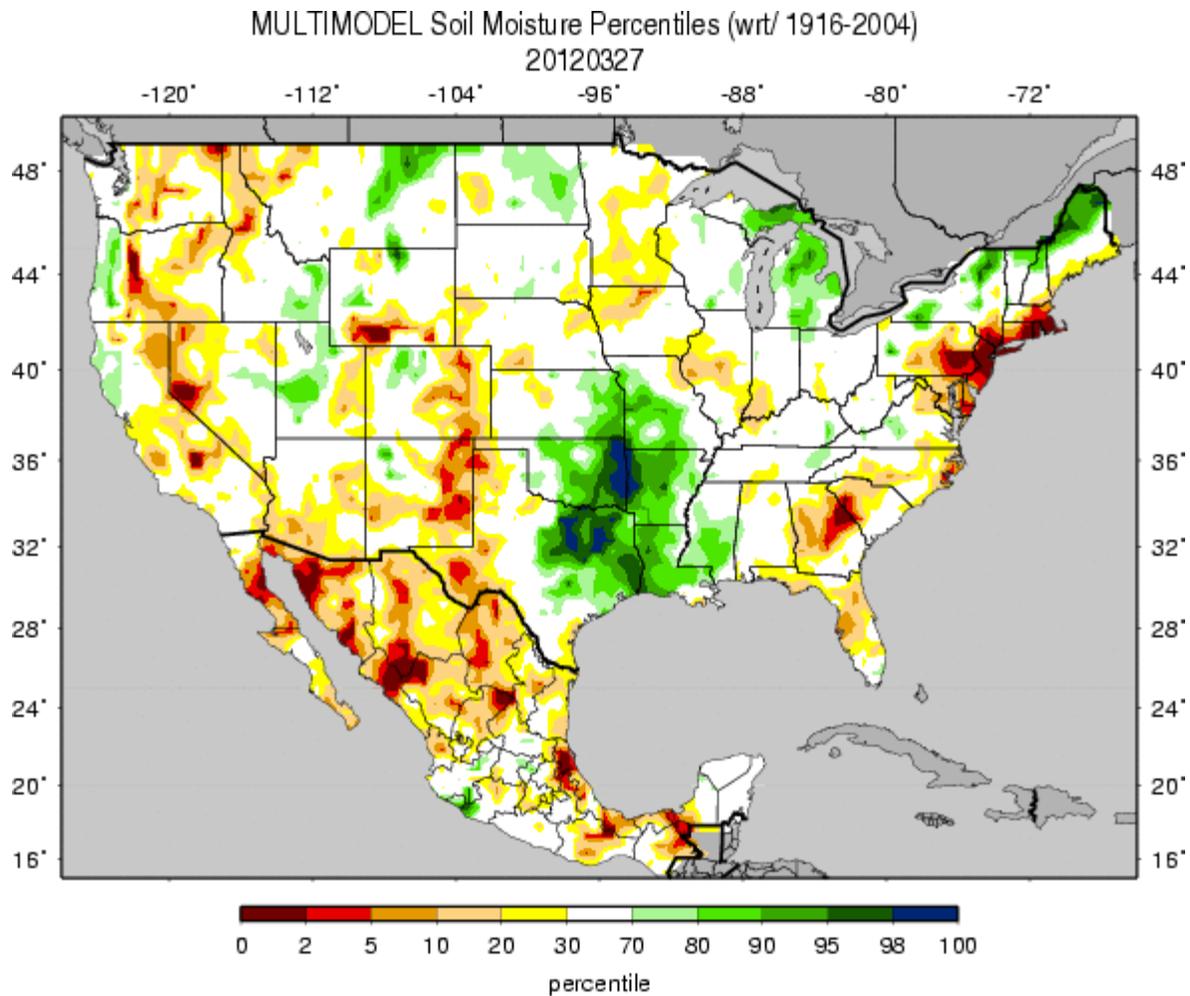


Released Thursday, March 29, 2012
Eric Luebehusen, USDA

<http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu>

Fig. 4c: Drought Monitor for the [Southeastern States](#) with statistics over various time periods. Note some improvements in D0 and D1 categories this week.

Weekly Snowpack and Drought Monitor Update Report



Figs. 5: Soil Moisture ranking in percentile as of 27 March shows conditions severe over northern New Jersey and southern New England and saturated conditions over eastern Oklahoma and eastern Texas. Note: Soil moisture this time of year is often unreliable due to frozen ground over the Northern Tier States. For example, conditions over the Washington Cascades and Panhandle of Idaho no doubt will reflect more moisture in the weeks due to abundant snow cover.

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Soil Climate Analysis Network (SCAN)

Station (2016) MONTH=2012-02-28 (Daily) NRCS National Water and Climate Center - Provisional Data - subject to revision
Thu Mar 29 08:44:59 PDT 2012

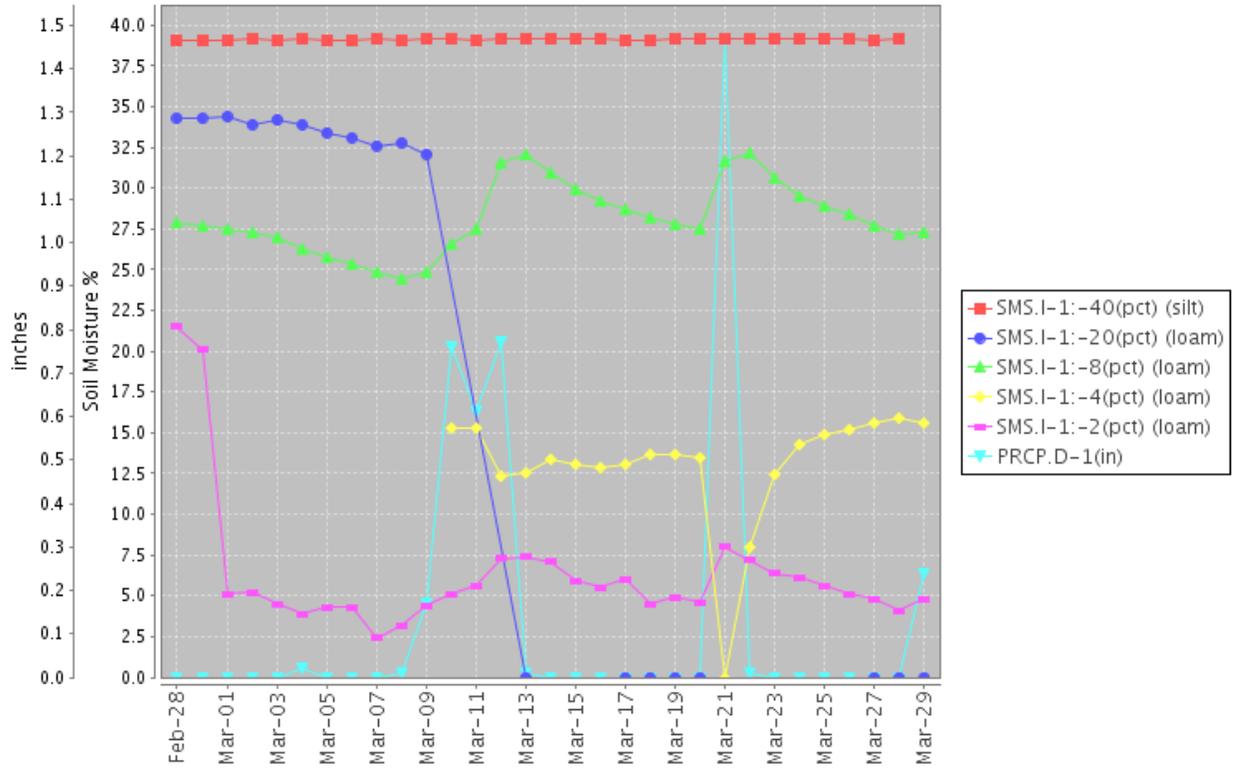


Fig. 6: This NRCS resource shows a site over [eastern Texas](#) with soil moisture responding to recent rains even at depth.

Weekly Snowpack and Drought Monitor Update Report

Wednesday, March 28, 2012

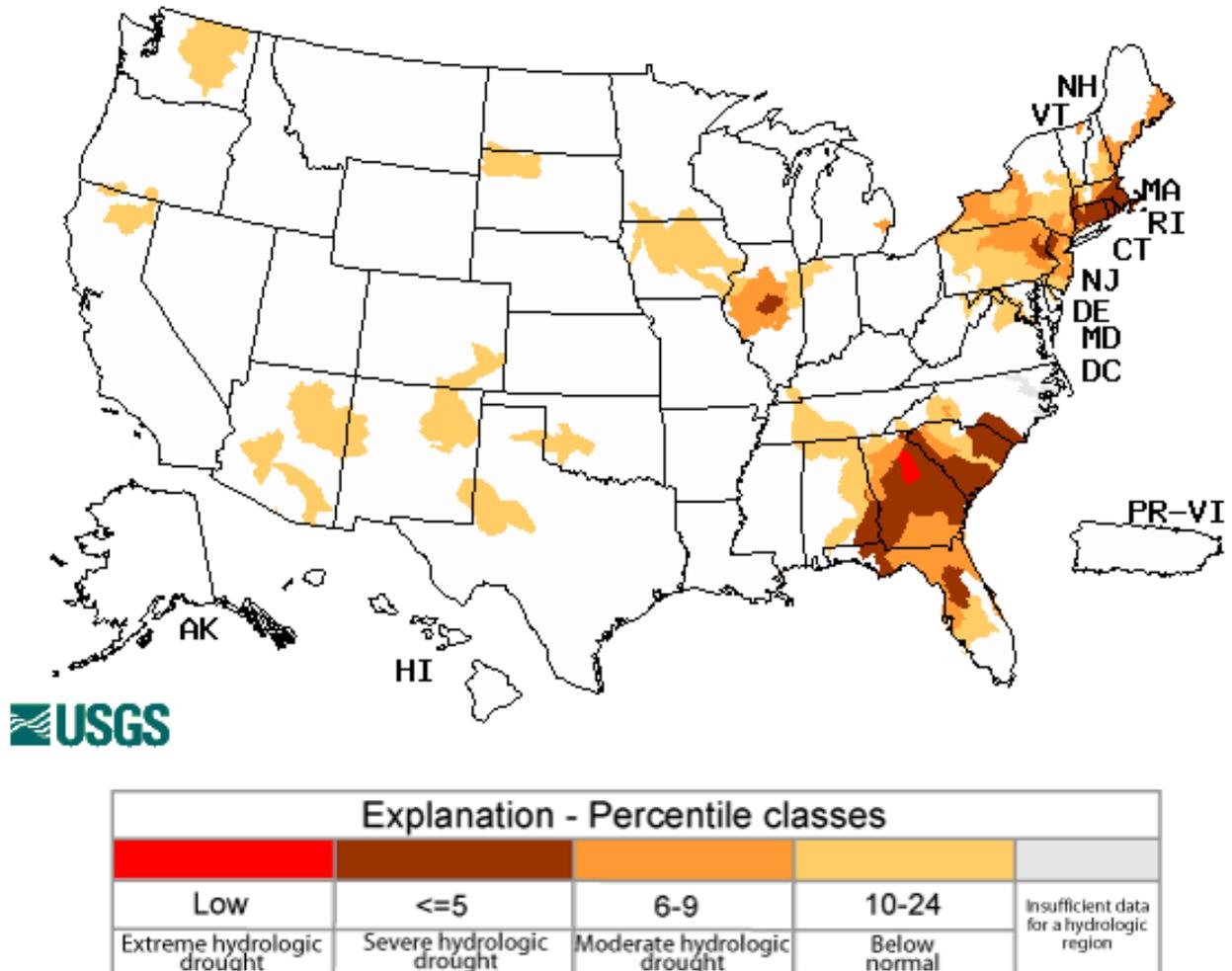


Fig. 7: Map of below normal 7-day average [streamflow](#) compared to historical streamflow for the day of year. Northern Georgia now shows **extreme** conditions this week. Southern New England has deteriorated rapidly this week.

Weekly Snowpack and Drought Monitor Update Report

National Drought Summary -- March 27, 2012

The discussion in the Looking Ahead section is simply a description of what the official national guidance from the National Weather Service (NWS) National Centers for Environmental Prediction is depicting for current areas of dryness and drought. The NWS forecast products utilized include the HPC 5-day QPF and 5-day Mean Temperature progs, the 6-10 Day Outlooks of Temperature and Precipitation Probability, and the 8-14 Day Outlooks of Temperature and Precipitation Probability, valid as of late Wednesday afternoon of the USDM release week. The NWS forecast web page used for this section is:

<http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/forecasts/>.

For the second consecutive week, locally heavy rain provided drought relief in the south-central U.S., while another in a series of late-season Pacific storms brought beneficial precipitation to much of the Northwest. Much-needed rain fell across the central Atlantic Coastal states, but rain largely bypassed the Northeast. Unseasonable warmth persisted nearly nationwide, maintaining unseasonably high evapotranspiration rates and crop water demands across the Great Plains and Midwest.

Mid-Atlantic and Northeast: Mostly dry, warm weather prevailed, with shower activity confined to southern-most portions of the region. In southern New England, Moderate Drought (D1) was expanded to account for 90-day precipitation deficits of 6 to 8 inches (less than 50 percent of normal). Streamflows and well-water levels have dropped further, and are in the lowest 2nd and 5th percentile, respectively, in this region. In addition, locales from northeastern Pennsylvania into southern New York and northern New Jersey will need rain soon to prevent a rapid onset and expansion of D1. Meanwhile, showers generally disappointed from southern Pennsylvania into Maryland and southeastern Virginia, with amounts mostly less than half an inch. In southwestern Virginia, moderate to heavy rain (2-5 inches) eased Abnormal Dryness (D0), with streamflows and soil moisture showing enough recovery to warrant the change.

Southeast: Locally heavy showers in northern and eastern portions of North Carolina contrasted with mostly drier- and warmer-than-normal weather elsewhere. A slow-moving disturbance generated 1 to 4 inches of rain across northern and eastern North Carolina.; with a subsequent jump in streamflows and soil moisture, D0 (Abnormal Dryness) and Moderate Drought (D1) were reduced. However, D0 was maintained in eastern and northern portions of the state to reflect lingering 180-day precipitation deficits of 4 to 6 inches (locally more). Meanwhile, scattered showers and thunderstorms occurred from central and eastern South Carolina into southern Georgia and north-central Florida, preventing any further drought increases. Despite the shower activity, streamflows exhibited only a minor improvement, and were still mostly in the 10th percentile or lower where the rain fell. Dryness persisted across the rest of the region, with no changes made to the drought designation. In Alabama, however, the western-most drought area reported 3 to 5 inches of rain, resulting in a small eastward shift of the western drought boundary.

Delta: Very heavy showers and thunderstorms developed over the Delta's drought areas during the past week, with 3 to more than 10 inches of rain eliminating drought from the region. Long-term precipitation deficits linger in southern-most portions of the Delta, with Abnormal Dryness (D0) maintained to reflect 180-day precipitation departures of 12 inches or more (less than 50 percent of normal). Despite these underlying deficits, local assessments indicated the impacts of the drought had essentially ended with this week's heavy rain.

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South-Central U.S.: Moderate to heavy showers across central and eastern drought areas contrasted with unfavorably dry, warm weather in southern- and western-most portions of the region. 1 to 3 inches of rain provided additional drought relief in eastern portions of Texas and much of central and eastern Oklahoma. In eastern Texas, Severe Drought (D2) was removed, with only a small area of Moderate Drought (D1) left to reflect slow-to-recover reservoir levels while the rain alleviated D0 (Abnormal Dryness) in a large part of Oklahoma. Additional detailed assessment of the region's ongoing and former drought areas indicated that despite recent heavy rainfall, reservoirs continued to run well below normal. In many of these areas, reservoir levels imply drought worse than depicted; the low lake levels are due to a complex set of conditions, including long-term decline in many reservoirs and meteorological drought conditions within reservoir drainage areas that are worse than drought conditions at the reservoir locations themselves. Water restrictions on areas served by those reservoirs may likewise be more severe than the Drought Monitor depiction of drought status in those areas. From northern Texas into western Oklahoma, beneficial showers (0.5-1 inch) provided some relief from Severe (D2) to Exceptional (D4) drought. Farther west, the southern High Plains reported 90-degree heat with little if any rain, keeping this region firmly entrenched in Severe (D3) to Exceptional (D4) Drought.

Central and Northern Plains: Unseasonably warm, dry conditions prevailed over the northern two-thirds of the region, while beneficial rain soaked portions of Kansas. A slow-moving disturbance produced 1 to 2 inches of rain over much of central and southern Kansas, with locally up to 3 inches reported in the southwestern quarter of the state. As a result, 3-month precipitation now averaged 100 to 160 percent of normal across central and eastern Kansas, where D0 (Abnormal Dryness) was removed. Widespread improvements were also made in southwestern Kansas, although the lingering impacts of long-term severe to extreme drought will be slow to be erased. From northern Kansas into eastern Montana and western portions of the Dakotas, mostly dry, windy, and warmer-than-normal weather (10-20°F above average) resulted in an expansion of D0 and D1 (Moderate Drought). Precipitation over the past 6 months has totaled locally less than 50 percent of normal from northern Kansas into western Nebraska and eastern Montana, and below 40 percent of normal in western portions of the Dakotas. The unseasonable warmth (highs reaching the lower to middle 80s) has accelerated crop development and heightened the need for rain over the upcoming weeks. In contrast, additional assessment coupled with a round of generally light showers (0.25-0.50 inch) led to a minor reduction in D0 coverage in north-central North Dakota.

Midwest: Drought areas of the Midwest—which extend from northwestern Iowa into northern portions of Minnesota and Michigan's Upper Peninsula—reported another week of record-setting warmth (temperatures averaging 15 to 25°F, or more, above normal). Despite the arrival of a storm system in the region's northern tier, rain amounts were generally disappointing (0.5 inch or less). However, isolated, locally heavy showers (1-3 inches) provided some relief from Moderate Drought (D1) in northern Minnesota. In contrast, Abnormal Dryness (D0) was introduced across central Illinois and the northeastern corner of Missouri, where increasing rainfall shortages (90-day precipitation locally less than 50 percent of normal) were noted. Illinois has also reported remarkably low streamflows for this time of year, with streams in the central portions of the state reporting flow rates in the lowest 5th percentile.

Western U.S.: Late-season storminess provided much-needed precipitation across western and northern portion of the region, while dry, unfavorably warm weather settled over central and eastern drought areas of the west.

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In northern portions of the region, another in a series of late-season Pacific storms generated moderate to heavy rain and mountain snow (2-6 inches liquid equivalent), maintaining favorable spring runoff prospects from the Klamath Mountains northward into the Cascades. Snowpacks increased in northwestern Oregon and from northeastern Oregon into northern Idaho and northwestern Montana. However, the lingering Moderate Drought (D1) in central Washington received little if any precipitation, with only minor reductions made to southeastern portions of this area (where precipitation totaled more than half an inch). In northeastern Oregon, precipitation totaled locally more than an inch, resulting in additional reduction of D1 and D0.

In southern portions of the region, showers in the west contrasted with dry, increasingly warm conditions farther east. Rain and high-elevation snow fell in the Sierra Nevada, although snow-water equivalents remained in the lowest 5th percentile (indicative of D3 drought) in southern portions of the range, where Severe Drought (D2) persisted. A weakening disturbance produced 1 to 2 inches of rain along the southern California Coast, preventing – for the time being – any drought intensification in these locales. The Southwest was dry, with water-year precipitation totaling less than 30 percent of normal in the newly-expanded Severe Drought (D2) areas of southeastern California and neighboring portions of southern Nevada. Expansion of Extreme (D3) drought was noted in southwestern Arizona, as local assessment coupled with satellite-derived vegetation information indicated deteriorating conditions in this corner of the state. In Colorado, most of the state was now under Abnormal Dryness (D0) or worse, with Severe Drought (D2) introduced in the northwestern quarter of the state, where snow-water equivalents and water-year precipitation were in the lowest 5th percentile (generally 50 percent of normal or less).

Alaska, Hawaii, and Puerto Rico: In Alaska, cold conditions continued, with temperatures averaging more than 10°F below normal. Dry weather prevailed, although the state's snowpacks remained at or above seasonal norms. In Hawaii, there were no changes to the drought designation, with rain (locally up to 5 inches) mainly confined to the Big Island. There were no concerns for drought on Puerto Rico, with moderate to heavy rain (2- 6 inches) reported the island.

Looking Ahead: A series of Pacific disturbances will maintain periods of rain and high-elevation snow across the northwestern quarter of the nation, with some light to moderate precipitation also likely in the Sierra Nevada. Meanwhile, dry, warm weather will prevail from the Plains into the Southwest. However, a developing storm late in the period may provide some locally heavy rain to the nation's mid-section, although the track, placement, and intensity of this storm system is yet to be determined. In the East, a pair of weak cold fronts will produce mostly light showers, with a swath of heavier rain possible across southern portions of the Northeast. The CPC 6-10 day forecast for April 3-7 calls for above-normal temperatures across the Rockies and Great Plains, with near- to below-normal temperatures east of the Mississippi and along the Pacific Coast. Drier-than-normal conditions are expected across much of the southern and eastern U.S., including the central Rockies and High Plains, with above-normal precipitation confined to the Pacific Northwest.

Author: [Eric Luebehusen, U.S. Department of Agriculture](#)

Dryness Categories

D0 ... Abnormally Dry ... used for areas showing dryness but not yet in drought, or for areas recovering from drought.

Weekly Snowpack and Drought Monitor Update Report

Drought Intensity Categories

D1 ... Moderate Drought

D2 ... Severe Drought

D3 ... Extreme Drought

D4 ... Exceptional Drought

Drought or Dryness Types

S ... Short-Term, typically <6 months (e.g. agricultural, grasslands)

L ... Long-Term, typically >6 months (e.g. hydrology, ecology)

Updated March 28, 2012